

>> what they are doing is against the law. We talk about Facebook and Topix[.com]. A lot of the main things I try to cover are the social-media issues. It is a new area nobody really knows how to combat well, yet. We are trying to do the best we can to get parents involved."

Creating relationships, humanizing the roles of officers and breaking down barriers is an intense part of Allen's work.

"Most kids hate the police," he said. "They are raised that way. Now, I'm not saying that because I'm down here they love the police. But kids relate to you when you cut up with them and you build that relationship with them. That way when they deal with an officer on the street, they know we are not all robots. I like that. I can see a difference in some kids. One kid came to school one day and didn't want me to look at him or anything. Little by little, one day he asked what my name was. That was a big break through. It's rewarding seeing stuff like that."

Glenn emphasized the importance of Allen's relationships with the community's younger members.

"The parents like it," he said. "They like knowing their school is protected by a school resource officer."

"Having an SRO is not going to guarantee nothing is going to happen or nobody is going to get hurt," Allen added. "But, the principal can tell you, if you look at the referrals this year, they are down. The drug cases have actually gone up because I am getting more people to tell me stuff. Which is good. But, the fights, the disturbances, the damage to the school, even tobacco use is down."

Allen's position in the school also allows for good follow up when juveniles are caught wandering the streets when they aren't supposed to be, Glenn said.

Greg Whobrey, a lifelong Leitchfield resident, spent five of his six years with LPD working third shift, and as a result, working with a lot of wandering teenagers.

"We don't have a curfew, although sometimes I tell them there is, just to make sure they go home," Whobrey said. "A lot of times, calling moms and dads takes care of the problem. You hate to get a kid

that's just out there and not really doing anything in the court system. So, we try to let mom and dad take care of the problem. But, I let them know, that if they don't, then I'm going to take care of it, and they aren't going to like what happens."

"I think that is another good thing about a small town," Glenn added. "If Greg deals with a juvenile out here, he can call their parents. He may not know them, he might, but if he knows them, he is going to have a good rapport with them and be able to follow up with them. He might see them at Wal-Mart next week and they'll tell him, 'Hey, I took care of that problem.' Then, with Braxton at the high school, we can tell them what this kid was doing, and he can talk to them the next day. It works pretty well."

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▼ Leitchfield School Resource Officer Braxton Allen spends his days among the community's teenagers at Grayson County High School. It's an important job, he says, and one that has been rewarding.



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